

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a honeycomb structure comprising the steps of:

making a clay by mixing and kneading a silicon carbide powder raw material, a metal silicon raw material, an organic binder, and a raw material containing alkaline earth metal;

forming the clay to form a formed body; and

pre-firing and firing the formed body,

wherein the firing is performed at a temperature of 1400 - 1800°C in a protective container made of silicon carbide in which a solid containing aluminum is ~~placed~~placed,

wherein the solid containing aluminum is composed of at least one of a fire-resistant particulate body having a grain size in a range from 0.01 to 1 mm and a fire-resistant block body having water absorption equal to or above 0.05% by weight, and is placed such that a separation distance from the body to be fired is equal to or below 50 cm.

2. (Original) The method of manufacturing a honeycomb structure according to claim 1,

wherein the solid has a total weight ratio of aluminum in the solid placed in the protective container equal to or above 0.01 relative to a total weight of a fired material.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of manufacturing a honeycomb structure according to claim 1,

wherein the solid contains aluminum equal to or above 1% in terms of a weight composition ratio in oxide equivalent.

4-8. (Canceled)